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# Newsroom

December 14, 2012

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## Newsroom

Georgia Southern University

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# Georgia Southern University Graduates Receive Degrees during Fall Commencement

DECEMBER 14, 2012

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Georgia Southern University held its 21<sup>st</sup> annual Fall Commencement at Hanner Fieldhouse today where University President Brooks Keel, Ph.D., conferred degrees to more than 1,500 undergraduate and graduate students.

"This is a memorable day for the newest graduates in the Eagle Nation," said Keel. "This University is proud of your hard work in the classroom, on our campus and in our community. We know you will be successful as you begin your careers and start a new chapter in your lives."

The highlights from three graduation ceremonies included the first degree awarded from the Georgia Southern engineering program which began last fall. Dwight Franklyn Gustard graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a bachelor of science degree in Mechanical Engineering. Georgia

Southern began offering engineering degrees in civil engineering, electrical engineering and mechanical engineering in fall 2011 becoming one of the nation's newest engineering schools. Gustard is the first to graduate from the University with one of the degrees from the University's new Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering & Information Technology which was created this past year.

Georgia Southern also presented its first ever Doctor of Clinical Psychology degree (Psy.D.) to Forrest Jay Rackham. The Psy.D. program originated from a longstanding and dire need for licensed psychologists in the rural, underserved areas of the United States, most specifically in the rural south. The program trains students to become generalists who practice psychotherapy and psychological assessment. This mission is consistent with Georgia Southern University's commitment to serve the needs of the region. The first cohort of students began the program in the fall of 2007.

Commencement speakers for this year's ceremonies included Kara Martin, M.D., a former Miss Georgia Southern and Miss Georgia; Frank Simmons, III, Ph.D., a senior engineer at Gulfstream; and Leonard Bevill, president and chief executive officer of Macon Occupational Medicine. The graduates heard simple yet direct messages from the speakers. "Nothing will be handed to you in life," said Bevill. "You have to earn it through individual hard work. Today you have taken the first step in building a more promising future."

Gulfstream's Frank Simmons told the graduates they have the skills to tackle and solve any problem because they have the best tools at their fingertips. "Go out and find your opportunity," said Simmons. "Go forth with determination and desire. Find your mission. Be ready when the mission finds you."

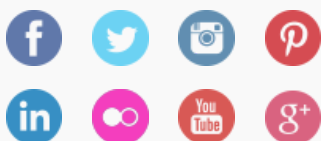
Dr. Kara Martin encouraged the students to be problem solvers and possibility thinkers. "The professors at Georgia Southern are excellent leaders," explained Martin. "They want you to have academic, career and personal success. Your Georgia Southern education can help you achieve that."

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers more than 120 degree programs serving more than 20,500 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. In 2011, the University was named one of the Top 10 most popular universities in the country by *U.S. News & World Report* and is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered approach to education.

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Congratulations to #GeorgiaSouthern @GSCOSM alumnus Nick Wiley ('83) who was recently named the chief conservation officer of @DucksUnlimited ! [ow.ly/BhVW30hkDJR](https://ow.ly/BhVW30hkDJR)



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